

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

BY CLIFTON JOHNSON





BEDTIME WONDER TALES

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HOP-O'-MY-THUMB
THE BABES IN THE WOOD
THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER
THE FOX AND THE LITTLE RED HEN
GOLDEN HAIR AND THE THREE BEARS

CINDERELLA
PUSS IN BOOTS
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD
THE STORY OF CHICKEN-LICKEN

Additional books will be added
to this series from time to time.



The little boy and his soldiers
(Page 12)

BEDTIME WONDER TALES

THE
BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

BY
CLIFTON JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED BY
HARRY L. SMITH

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

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The books in this series of Bedtime Wonder Tales are made up of favorite stories from the folklore of all nations. Such stories are particularly enjoyed by children from four to twelve years of age. As here told they are free from the savagery, distressing details, and excessive pathos which mar many of the tales in the form that they have come down to us from a barbaric past. But there has been no sacrifice of the simplicity and humor and sweetness that give them perennial charm.

The sources of the stories in this volume are as follows: Page 11, Andersen; 23, Grimm; 38, England; 43, Norway; 60, Grimm; 65, England; 75, France; 88, Spain; 95, Ireland; 124, Siam.

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THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

I

THE CASTLE MAIDEN

THERE were once twenty-five tin soldiers who were all brothers. They carried muskets and held them very upright, and they had red and blue uniforms that were very gay indeed. They lived in a box where they lay in a row side by side. The cover was on, and they could see nothing in the darkness, and they were packed in so tight they could scarcely move.

But at last the cover was taken off, and they found that they had been given to a little boy for a birthday present. He stood

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them up on the table and arranged them in ranks, and played with them for a long time.

They were all exactly alike except one. That one had only a single leg, for he had been made last when there was not quite tin enough to complete him. However, he stood as firmly on his one leg as the others did on their two. It is of his adventures that this story tells.

On the same table with the soldiers were several other playthings. The most charming of these was a pretty cardboard castle. You could look into the rooms through its little windows, and in front of it stood some tiny trees. The trees were clustered around a little mirror that was intended to represent a lake. Waxen swans swam in the lake and were reflected on its surface.

All this was very pretty, but still prettier was a little cardboard damsel standing in the

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open doorway of the castle. She had on a frock of the whitest muslin, and a piece of blue ribbon was flung across her shoulders like a scarf.

"That lady would be just the wife for me," the tin soldier thought; "but I am afraid she is of rather too high rank. She lives in a castle. My home is only a box. Besides, I have to share the box with the rest of our twenty-five men. Of course it is no place for her. I can never hope to marry her, but there will be no harm in making her acquaintance."

He was stationed behind a work-basket that was on the table. From there he had a full view of the delicate little lady.

When evening came all the other tin soldiers were put away in the box, but he was not seen behind the work-basket and was left undisturbed. Presently the people of the house went to bed. Then the things on

the table with which the little boy had been playing began to play on their own account.

The tin soldiers rattled in the box, for they wanted to share in the fun, but they could not raise the cover. The nutcrackers cut capers, the slate-pencil had fine sport on the slate, and there was a great racket.

The one-legged tin soldier and the cardboard maiden were the only things that did not move from their places. As for the maiden, she remained looking out from the doorway of the castle, and the tin soldier stood firmly on his one leg, never for a moment turning his eyes away from her.

Twelve o'clock struck. Suddenly the lid of a small box at the soldier's elbow flew back, and up jumped from inside of it little black conjuror. He was a Jack-in-the-box.

"Tin soldier!" the conjuror shrieked, "will you keep your eyes to yourself?"

II

A FALL FROM A WINDOW

WHEN the morrow came and the children were out of bed, the tin soldier was placed on the ledge of an open window. Thence he could look down three stories into a city street. He had not been there long when out he tumbled head foremost. A dreadful fall was that! Whether the conjuror was the cause of it I cannot say. The tin soldier landed heels upward on the street walk with his bayonet sticking between the paving stones.

Rain began to fall, and there was a hard shower. When the rain was over two boys came along.

"Look," one said, "here is a tin soldier.

The tin soldier pretended not to hear.

"Well, only wait till tomorrow!" the conjuror threatened.

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He shall have a boatripe for once in his life."

They made a boat out of an old newspaper, and put the tin soldier into it. Then away he sailed down the gutter, while the two boys ran along beside him clapping their hands.

The paper boat rocked to and fro, and every now and then veered around so quickly that the tin soldier became quite giddy. But he moved not a muscle, looked straight before him, and held his musket tightly clasped.

All at once the boat sailed into a tunnel under the pavement. "That's the last of him," the boys said, and turned away.

He was now in darkness almost as dense as if he had been at home in his own box. "This is all that conjuror's doing," he thought. "Yes, to be sure it is! Where shall I go next, I wonder. How dark this tunnel is! Ah! if only the little maiden were sail-

ing in the boat with me I would not care if the tunnel were twice as dark."

Just then a great water-rat that lived under the pavement darted out from a crevice in the tunnel. It began swimming after the paper boat, crying: "Stop! Tin soldier, I say stop!"

But the soldier was silent and held his weapon with a still firmer grasp. On he sailed, and the rat followed. Oh! how furiously it showed its teeth. However, the boat had too much of a start to be overtaken, and the rat soon turned back.

The current was growing stronger, and the tin soldier caught a glimpse of daylight on ahead. At the same time he heard a roaring sound which might well have caused the boldest heart to tremble. Only fancy! where the tunnel ended, the water of the gutter fell a distance of fully thirty inches into a canal. To make this descent was as dangerous for

worse than that of the gutter tunnel, and there was no room to move. Yet the tin soldier's courage did not forsake him. There he lay at full length shouldering his musket.

A few hours later the fish began to turn and twist and make the strangest movements, but at last it became quite still. More time passed, and then what seemed to the soldier to be a flash of lightning darted through the fish. The daylight shone brightly, and some one exclaimed, "Here is a tin soldier!"

The fish had been caught, taken to market, sold, and carried to a home kitchen. There a servant girl was cutting it up with a large knife. She seized the tin soldier and took him to the parlor, where everybody was eager to see the remarkable man who had been swallowed by a fish.

They set him on the table, and, wonder of wonders! the tin soldier was in the very same room where he had been before. He saw the

the tin soldier as sailing down a mighty waterfall would be for us.

The boat darted forward, and the poor tin soldier held himself as stiff and immovable as possible. No one could accuse him of even blinking. As the boat went over the fall it spun round and round four times and half filled with water. The tin soldier saw plainly that the boat was about to sink. Deeper and deeper it settled, softer and softer grew the paper.

Soon the water was up to the soldier's neck. He thought of the pretty cardboard maiden, whom he felt sure he never would see again. Then the water went over his head. Immediately afterward the paper tore apart, and the tin soldier fell through the rent. But as he was sinking toward the bottom of the canal he was swallowed by a large fish.

What darkness he was in now! It was far

same children, the same playthings were on the table, and among the playthings was the beautiful castle with the pretty little cardboard maiden standing in the doorway.

He would have wept for joy had not such weakness been unbecoming in a soldier. He looked at the maiden, and she looked at him, but neither spoke a word.

Now one of the little boys took up the soldier and threw him into the fire. He did not give any reason for doing so. No doubt the Jack-in-the-box conjuror had something to do with the mischievous act.

There stood the tin soldier in a blaze of red light. He felt extremely hot. Whether this heat was the result of the fire, or of the flames of love within him, he knew not. He looked at the little damsel. She looked at him. He was melting, but still he stood firmly with his musket at his shoulder.

A door opened, and a gust of wind came in.

The wind seized the cardboard maiden, and she flew straight into the fire to the tin soldier. She remained in view only a moment. Then she blazed up and was gone.

The tin soldier did not last much longer. He soon melted into a hard lump, and when the maid took up the ashes the next day, she found his remains in the shape of a little tin heart.

said. "Tell me your troubles, and perhaps I may be of some service."

Then the merchant related how all his wealth had gone to the bottom of the sea.

"Oh, well! don't mourn any more about that," the dwarf said. "Only promise that twelve years hence you will bring here to me whatever creature, whether beast, bird, or human, meets you first on your return home. Promise that, and I will see that you never want for gold."

The merchant promised, and thought he had the best of the bargain until he approached his home. Then, who should come running to meet him but his little boy? The merchant was greatly distressed to think that he had given his boy to the dwarf.

"Very likely, though, the dwarf was only joking," he said; "for I see no sign of the gold he told me I was to have."

A few days afterward, as he was cleaning

III

THE MERCHANT'S SON

A CERTAIN merchant sent two richly laden ships on a voyage. He invested all his property in them, and he hoped to make great gains. But the ships were wrecked, and the merchant was reduced from wealth to poverty. He had to leave his fine home in the city and live in a poor little cottage that was out in the country near the ocean.

One day, as he was walking along the seashore, thinking sadly of his future, a rough-looking dwarf appeared before him and asked why he was so sad.

"I would tell you if it would do any good," the merchant responded.

"Who knows but that it may?" the dwarf

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out an old lumber room, he found a box full of gold pieces under a heap of rubbish in a corner. Then he was fearful that the dwarf was in earnest.

However, there was the gold, and what was he to do with it? He concluded to go into business again, and in a little while he was richer than he had been before.

Time went on, and the son grew up. When the end of the twelve years drew near, the merchant became very anxious. One day he told his son about his promise to the dwarf.

"Well," the son said, "I would not worry. Perhaps things will not turn out as badly as you imagine."

The appointed date came, and they went together to the seashore. There they found the dwarf, and the merchant begged him not to take away his son. They argued for a long time.

At last the dwarf said: "I will relinquish

my rights on one condition. It is this—that your son shall get into an open boat and be set adrift on the sea without sail or oars.”

“O cruel dwarf!” the merchant exclaimed, “if I must choose between the sea and you, I choose the sea.”

Then the dwarf led the way to a boat that was drawn up on the beach near where they had been talking. They dragged the boat to the water, the son got in, and the dwarf pushed it off.

The merchant hoped his son would drift to shore, but the wind and current carried the little craft farther and farther away till he could see it no longer. After that he hoped his son would be rescued by some vessel, but the weeks and months slipped away without his hearing anything from him, and finally he gave up his son for lost.

However, the young man was not drowned in the sea as his father thought. He had

sat securely in the little boat while it rocked along over the waves until it was wafted to the shores of a strange foreign country.

Not far from where he came to land was a lofty mountain, and the color of the mountain was yellow, like gold. On its summit was a beautiful castle. The merchant's son walked away from the sea, and climbed the golden mountain.

But when he reached the castle he discovered that it was empty and desolate, for it was enchanted. He went all through the great building and saw not a living thing till he entered one of the chambers. There he found a white snake, and this white snake spoke to him.

“Oh! how glad I am to see you,” it said. “I am not really a snake. A wicked dwarf has enchanted me. I am the Queen of the Golden Mountain. Twelve long years have I waited for a deliverer.”

“If you will tell me in what way I can be of service to you,” the merchant's son said, “I will do anything I can to disenchant you.”

“Then listen to me,” the queen said. “This night twelve black men will come, and they will ask you why you are here. But be silent. Give them no answer. Let them do what they will, even if they beat and torment you. Speak not a word, or you cannot save me. At twelve o'clock they will go away.

“The second night they will come again and do as they did before. The same black men will come the third night, and they will try their worst to make you speak. But if you will withstand them till the twelfth hour of that night I shall be free.”

“Have no fear that I will fail,” the young man said. “Your wishes shall be obeyed.”

Everything came to pass as the queen had foretold. The merchant's son was threat-

ened, beaten, and tormented. Yet he spoke not a word, and at twelve o'clock on the third night the black men hastened away, howling with rage and disappointment.

Then the white snake became a beautiful young queen. The castle was disenchanting too, and it was all that the home of a queen should be. So charming was the lady that the youth fell in love with her. She liked him as well as he liked her, and soon a wedding was celebrated in the castle. Thus the merchant's son became the King of the Golden Mountain.

you will not use it to bring me to your father's home."

"I promise," he said, and he put the ring on his finger.

Then he wished that he was near the city where his father lived. A moment later he found himself at the city gates. But the clothes he wore were so different from those worn by the people of his home country that the city guards were suspicious and would not let him in. So he walked off across the fields trying to think what he would do next.

Presently he came to a shepherd's hut. The shepherd stood in the doorway, and the king said to him, "I will give you a golden guinea for a suit of your old garments, and you can have the suit I am wearing into the bargain."

The shepherd was very glad to part with his old clothes at that price. When the king put them on and left his own fine apparel

IV

THE WISHING RING

EIGHT years passed, and then the king said to the queen: "I must go to visit my father. In all the years that I have been here he has had no word from me. He must think I am dead. I shall start at once."

"No, no!" the queen cried, "do not go."

But the king was so anxious to see his father, and he urged the need of going so seriously that at last the queen consented. When he was about to start she gave him a wishing ring.

"Take this ring," she said, "and put it on your finger. You need only turn it around, and any wish you make will be granted. But I want you to promise that

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behind, the shepherd could only think that the poor fellow had lost his wits.

Now the king went back to the city, and because of his humble garb the guards supposed him to be a peasant. So they let him pass without question. Then he hastened to his father's house, and told the merchant that he was his son.

"But my son is dead, long since," the merchant said. He would not believe it possible that this ragged fellow was his son, whom he had seen disappear eight years previous in the little boat.

"Is there no mark by which you would know if I am really your son?" the king asked at length.

"Yes," the merchant replied, "my son had a mark like a raspberry on the under side of his right arm, just above the elbow."

Then the king pulled up the sleeve on his right arm, and showed the mark. So the

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merchant was satisfied that the young man was his son. He listened with amazement while the son related how he had married a queen and was King of the Golden Mountain.

"What! you tell me you are a king?" the merchant cried. "That cannot be true, else you would not be traveling about in a shepherd's frock."

The son was very much troubled when his father did not believe him. "I will prove to you that I speak the truth," he said.

Then, forgetful of his promise to his queen, he turned his ring and wished to have her there with him. Instantly she stood before him in her royal robes, and the merchant could not doubt longer that his son was King of the Golden Mountain as he had said.

But the queen wept because the king had broken his word. She stopped crying pres-

ently, yet she did not forget his broken promise. While he was asleep that very night she drew the ring from his finger and wished herself at home in her kingdom.

When the king awoke he was alone, and the ring was gone from his finger. He was very sorrowful then. "I will journey forth into the world," he said, "and perhaps I can find my kingdom again."

So saying, he set out and traveled for many days. At last he came near a hill on the top of which he heard loud and angry voices.

"I must find out what is going on here," he said.

Then he climbed the hill and crept along till he was near enough to see that two giants were disputing over the possession of a cloak and a pair of boots.

He listened and learned that the cloak made its wearer invisible, and that the boots

carried the person who put them on wherever he wished to go.

The giants began a desperate struggle, but soon one of them said: "Why should we kill each other? Let us bury the things that make the trouble between us and have no more to do with them."

"Yes, let us bury them," the other agreed.

So they scraped a hole in the dirt, threw in the cloak and boots, covered them up, and went off.

Then the king ran to the spot where the cloak and boots were buried, and dug them out. After shaking them free from dirt, he put them on, and they fitted perfectly, for they were magic garments that increased or decreased in size to fit the stature of the wearer.

"Now I wish to be back on the Golden Mountain," the king said.

He was there at once, but no one knew he

had come, because the cloak he wore made him invisible. He discovered that the queen was very melancholy on account of her long separation from him.

"I would wish him back if he had not broken his promise," she sighed, looking at the ring on her finger.

These words she repeated again and again, but presently tears gathered in her eyes, and she said: "I cannot bear to have him away any longer. I wish he was here." At the same time she turned the ring.

Of course the king was already there, but she could not see him, and she looked around disappointed. "Can it be that the magic is gone from my ring?" she said. "I will try again."

Once more she turned the ring on her finger, and this time said, "I wish to be carried to the king."

As the king was in the same room, she re-

mained just where she was. Then he took pity on her and threw off the cloak he was wearing. So she saw him, and they ran to each other's arms. The king was happy, and the queen was happy, and they lived happily together on the Golden Mountain ever after.

V

A GIANT OUTWITTED

ONCE there was a giant who lived in an old mill. Every morning he set the mill wheels going, and he spent all day grinding.

At last there came a time when he said to himself: "I am tired of this unending work. If I only had a helper, I could give him orders and he would do the work while I sat comfortably looking on. Yes, that is what I want. Tomorrow I will not start the wheels, but will go and seek a helper."

So the next day he tramped off across the country, and concealed himself behind some great rocks near a highway. By and by a lad named Jack came whistling along the

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road. Then the giant leaped forth from his hiding place and captured him.

"Come with me," the giant ordered.

"I'd rather go home," Jack said.

"My mill is your home now," the giant told him, "and you are my servant."

So the giant compelled the lad to go along to the mill, and as soon as they got there he set the wheels going again. He made Jack attend to the grinding, and watched him so closely that the lad almost despaired of ever finding any chance escape.

Jack served the giant for seven years, and in all that time he did not have a single holiday. Finally he could bear the steady toil no longer. There was to be a fair at a neighboring town, and Jack begged that he might be allowed to go to it.

"No, no," the giant said, "you must stay here and look after the grinding."

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"I've been grinding and grinding these seven years with never a day off," Jack said; "and now I'll go to this fair whether you wish me to or not."

"We'll see about that," the giant growled.

It happened that the day was very warm, and after dinner the giant lay down on the floor of the mill, with his head on a sack of meal, and dozed. Beside him was a half loaf of bread from which he had been eating, and near the bread lay a great knife that he had used to cut the loaf.

Jack looked at the giant and said to himself: "That's where he always lies when he takes a nap—just inside of the door so I will be sure to wake him if I attempt to get out. I must try a trick."

Then he took a measure full of meal, crept up to the giant, and emptied it over his head.

With a great spluttering the giant sprang to his feet. "You young rascal!" he shout-

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ed, "you intend to escape, do you? But you will not."

His eyes were so full of meal that he was unable to see, yet he contrived to bar the door, and Jack found himself trapped. Then the giant groped about to get hold of the lad. He was aided by his favorite dog who barked and snapped at Jack's heels.

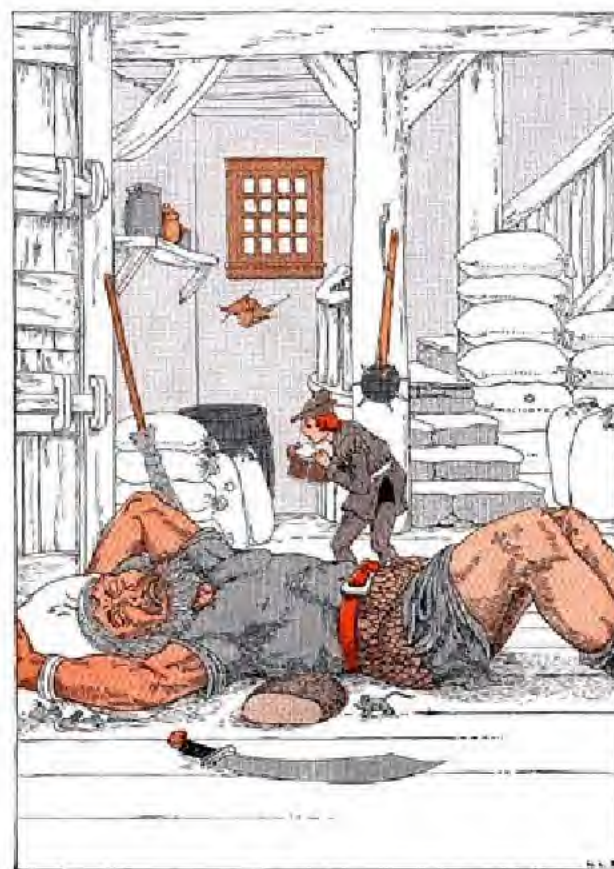
Jack saw that the two of them would be more than a match for him. So he caught up the giant's knife, which lay beside the partly eaten loaf of bread, and slashed off the dog's head. Then down he dropped on all fours. "Bow-wow!" he said.

"That's a good dog!" the giant cried. "Take hold of him! Catch the wretch! I've fed him seven years, and now, as a reward for my kindness, he has filled my eyes with meal. I shan't be able to see rightly the rest of the day."

"Bow-wow!" Jack barked. Then, still on

all fours, he ran between the giant's legs. The door was close by, and he reached up, unlatched it, and dashed out.

So he was able to attend the fair that day. Afterward he was careful not to go near enough to the old mill to give the giant any chance to lay hands on him again and put him back at the task of grinding.



Jack and the sleeping giant

VI

THE KING'S RABBITS

ONCE upon a time there was a poor farmer who had three sons. The sons' names were Paul, Philip, and Peter. None of the three liked work very well, and instead of helping their father they spent most of their time sauntering about.

At last Paul heard that the king wanted a keeper to watch his rabbits. So he told his father that he would go to the king's palace and apply for the position.

"I doubt if you are fitted for just that sort of work," his father said. "He who keeps the king's rabbits needs to be light and quick, and no lazy-bones. You could not loiter when the rabbits began to skip and

frisk, for if you dawdled as you do at home you would be discharged."

But the father's advice had no effect. Paul was determined to go. So he filled a bag with something to eat and drink, and a few other necessities, took the bag on his shoulder, and started. After traveling a few miles he heard a voice calling for help, and when he went in the direction whence the call sounded, he found an old woman had fallen in a pit from which she was unable to climb out.

"Don't stand there staring," she said sharply. "Reach me your hand and pull me up. I have been in this pit a whole year, and in all that time I have not had a morsel of food."

"What!" Paul exclaimed, "a whole year, do you say? Then you must be a witch, or you could not fast so long. I will have nothing to do with you."

to call the fugitives. But no rabbits came. When he reached the palace, there stood the king waiting for him. It was plain that Paul had failed, and for a punishment he was banished from the country.

Presently the king got a new lot of rabbits, and again he let it be known that he wanted a keeper. Paul's brother Philip heard of this, and nothing would do but he must try for the place. So away he went. By and by he found the old woman in the pit just as Paul had, and he would not help her out.

When he got to the palace he was promptly engaged as keeper of the rabbits. The next day he let them out to feed, and all went well until they shifted from the fields into the woods in the late afternoon. Then they skipped and hopped away. He rushed about and raced after them till he was ready to drop, but they all escaped. He returned to

So off he marched. At length he arrived at the king's palace, and was engaged as the keeper of the rabbits. He was promised plenty of food, and good pay, and maybe the princess into the bargain; for the king had decreed that any keeper who took such good care of the rabbits that not one of them escaped should have the princess for his wife.

The next day Paul let the rabbits out to browse. As long as they were near the stables and in the adjacent open fields he kept them in one flock, but toward evening they got into a wood and began to scuttle around among the trees. Paul ran after them this way and that until he had no breath left for any more running. He could not get the rabbits together. They all disappeared, and he saw nothing more of them.

After resting a while, he started to go back to the palace. As he went along he kept a sharp lookout, and he stopped at every fence

the palace without a rabbit, and the king ordered him to leave the country.

Another lot of bunnies was obtained to replace those that were lost, and once more word went forth that the king wanted a keeper for his rabbits. Peter, the youngest of the poor farmer's sons, heard of this, and concluded to apply for the job.

"That will be just the right work for me," he said to his father. "I would like nothing better than to spend my days in the fields and woodlands watching the rabbit flock. While they were feeding, I would be sure to have plenty of time to nap on the sunny hill-sides."

"I fear that you will fare no better than your two brothers," the farmer told him. "The person who keeps the king's rabbits must not be like a fellow with leaden soles to his shoes, or like a fly in a tar pot."

"Well," Peter said, "however things

may turn out, I shall get the job if I can. Surely, it will be no harder than to take care of the calf and goat here at home."

So he packed his bag, lifted it to his shoulder, and went off as happy as if his success were certain.

As soon as they finished, she gave him a horn, saying: "This is endowed with magic power. If you blow into the small end of it, whatever you wish to have away will be scattered to the four winds. If you blow into the large end, the things you wish to have near will at once come about you. Should the horn ever be lost or taken from you, all you need to do is to wish for it and it will return to you."

"Very good," Peter said. "Such a horn is worth having. It has a stout strap hitched to it and I can carry it hung over my shoulder."

Now he resumed his journey, and at length he reached the king's palace. He was hired to keep the rabbits, and he was much pleased; for he was certain of good food and generous wages, and he would win the princess if he were clever enough not to lose any of the rabbits.

VII

THE MAGIC HORN

As Peter trudged along on his way to the palace of the king, he heard a voice calling; and when he searched about, he found the old woman in the pit. "Good-day, grandmother," he said, "what can I do for you?"

"Help me out of this hole," she said, "and give me something to eat. I will do you a good turn afterward, you may depend on it."

He was willing enough, and he pulled her out of the pit. Then he opened his bag and sat down to eat and drink with her. She had a keen appetite after her long fast and naturally got the lion's share, but that did not trouble Peter any.

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The next morning he began work, and at first he found the task an easy one. As long as the rabbits were in the lanes and fields they behaved well, but while he was eating his noon lunch they wandered to the woodland, where they frisked about and scampered away into the underbrush.

"Ho, ho!" Peter cried, "you want to leave me, do you? Well, off with you then;" and he blew into the small end of the magic horn.

Immediately they were all gone from view. After that Peter found a mossy spot to his liking and lay down to sleep till eventide. The sun was low in the west when he awoke. He took up his horn, and blew into the large end of it. At once the rabbits came frolicking about him, and he led them like a flock of sheep to the king's palace.

The king, the queen, and the princess too, all came out on the porch and wondered how he contrived to manage the rabbits so well.

In order to make sure that they were all there the king counted them several times. He had to acknowledge that not one was missing.

"That rabbit-keeper would be a fine lad, if only he was of noble birth," the princess said.

He took the rabbits out again the next day, and when they roamed to the thickets he lay down in the shade at the edge of the wood, close to a sunny slope where the wild strawberries grew and scented the air with their sweet odor.

The king was curious to learn how the youth contrived to control the rabbits so admirably, and he sent a servant to watch him. By and by the servant came peeping about among the trees, and spied Peter asleep in the pleasant shade of the woodland. He hid in a clump of bushes, and waited.

Toward evening he saw Peter rise to his

feet and blow his horn, whereupon all the rabbits came scampering about him. The servant hastened home and told the king what he had observed. Afterward the king told his wife and daughter.

"Unless we put a stop to his using that horn," the princess said, "I shall have to marry him, and he is only a common farmer's son. Tomorrow I shall go to the wood, and while he is asleep I will take his horn and bring it home to the palace."

VIII

WINNING A PRINCESS

THE princess went to the wood just as she had planned, and she had little trouble in getting possession of the horn.

When Peter awoke it was gone—and how was he to get the rabbits together? But he remembered that the old woman had said he could get it back by wishing. So he wished for it.

That same moment the princess, who had nearly reached the palace, felt the horn suddenly slip through her fingers, and though she searched all about she could not find it.

The horn had returned to the hands of Peter in the woodland, and he promptly blew

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it to fetch the rabbits together. Then he went to the palace with them.

It was evident to the royal family that Peter had the horn. So the queen said she would go the next day to the wood, and they might be sure that *she* would not only take the horn, but she would bring it home.

The morrow came, and in the early afternoon she tramped off to where Peter lay asleep. She secured the horn, and hurried away with it, holding it very tight. But as she approached the palace it slipped from her grasp, and by and by the rabbit-keeper returned with his horn and flock as usual.

The king was very much disturbed. "I shall have to look into this matter, if we are going to get that wretched horn into our possession," he grumbled. "You women plan all right, but it usually takes a man to carry a plan to a successful conclusion."

On the following day, while Peter was hav-

ing his nap in the wood, the king came to the spot where the youth lay, and took the horn. To make doubly sure of it, the king put it in a bag he had brought along for the purpose.

Back he went to the palace. His wife and daughter met him at the door, and he triumphantly opened the bag to show them the horn. But it was not there. He had not succeeded any better than the women folk.

"Plague take the fellow!" he exclaimed. "There is some witchcraft about the way that horn disappears. The lad gets the best of us every time, and I suppose he may as well marry into the family first as last."

Pretty soon Peter arrived with his flock of rabbits, and put them in their night quarters. Then he heard the king calling to him, and went to the palace porch, where he found all the royal family waiting for him.

"What sort of a horn is that of yours?"

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At once the king was hurried off north, very much against his will, and kicking savagely. The queen flew east, and the princess flew west. Besides, a little kitchen maid who had come up behind Peter and was looking on, was hustled off south in such sudden haste that it seemed to her she would be seared out of a year's growth.

"Stop me, you rascal! Bring me back!" the king yelled as he vanished in the distance.

Peter turned the horn about, and blew into the big end. In a few moments the king and the others were back on the porch; and the little maid, vastly astonished by her experiences, lost no time in escaping to the kitchen.

"What do you mean by treating me in that fashion?" the king demanded. "You shall hang for it."

Peter raised the little end of the horn to

the king asked. "It looks ordinary enough, but I am sure it has some strange power, or you would not be able to take such excellent care of the rabbits and never lose a single one of them."

"It was given to me by an old woman," Peter said; "and if I blow in one end it does one thing, and if I blow in the other end it does the opposite."

"Oh! bother your explanations," the king cried. "Show us its power, and then we shall understand."

"But perhaps the showing would not please your Majesty," Peter said.

"Stuff and nonsense!" the king ejaculated. "I said, 'Show us.' Who is king here—you or I? It is my business to command. It is yours to obey."

"Very well," Peter responded, "then I wish you to scatter"; and he blew a good strong blast into the little end of his horn.



The cock and the hen have a ride

his lips, and the king, fearful that he would have to repeat his wild race, called out: "Enough, enough! The fault was mine. You shall have my daughter and half the kingdom, if only you won't blow that horrible horn in my presence. I'm too old and stiff to be dashing about the country as I did just now."

So, as soon as things could be made ready for a grand wedding, Peter married the princess, and they lived happily for the rest of their days.

IX

THE VAGABONDS

ONCE a cock and hen were talking together, and the cock said: "It is nutting time. Let us go to the mountain and have a good feast. We will eat all the nuts we can before the squirrels carry them away."

"Yes," the hen agreed, "let us go and enjoy ourselves."

So off they went to the mountain, and they stayed there till evening. Then the hen declared that she would not go home on foot. So the cock had to set to work and build a little carriage for her to ride in.

As soon as it was ready the hen seated herself in it. The cock was preparing to

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put on a harness and draw her home when a duck came running toward them.

"You thieving rascals!" the duck shouted, "who told you that you might come to my mountain? I shall have to drive you off."

She flew at the cock with her beak wide open. But he jumped a little aside to avoid her onrush, and hacked her so valiantly with his spurs that she begged for mercy.

"I will only pardon you," the cock said, "on condition that you draw this carriage I have made."

"I would rather do that than be stabbed to death with those spurs of yours," the duck said, and the cock soon had her in the harness.

Then the cock seated himself in the front of the carriage, and off they went at a great pace. Presently they overtook a pin and a needle.

"Stop, stop!" the needle cried out. "The

road is very muddy, and we are tired. Can't we ride a little way?"

"Well," the cock said, "you are such thin people you will not take up much room. Get in, but you must promise not to tread on the hen's toes or on mine."

By and by they stopped at an inn; for night had come. Besides, the cock and his fellow-passengers had wearied of riding in a carriage drawn by a duck, she waddled so much from side to side. The landlord made many objections to having such guests; but he was finally persuaded to let them stay, if they would be sure to pay for their lodging.

"Pay," the cock said. "Certainly we will pay. You can have this pin and needle, and this duck which lays an egg every day."

That settled the matter, and they all entered the inn. Then they ate supper and afterward had a very merry time until they went to bed.

day are gone too. I was to have them for my pay. Well, one thing is certain—I'll never again take such a pack of vagabonds into my house as long as I live."

Morning came, and the cock opened his eyes just as it was beginning to grow light, before any of the inn people were stirring. He at once awoke the hen, and off they two went over the fields and far away.

The noise of their going aroused the pin and needle. "We'd better be leaving too," one said to the other.

So they hastened forth and walked briskly along the highway.

The duck, who had gone to sleep in the yard, heard the pin and needle talking as they came out of the inn, and she concluded that she also would depart. She waddled away to a near brook and swam down it as fast as she could.

At length the landlord got up. He was much surprised to find that his queer guests were all gone. "I don't mind having the cock and hen leave," he said. "But the pin and needle, and the duck that lays an egg a

X

AN UNLUCKY WIFE

ONCE upon a time there was a farmer named Jan, who lived all alone in a little farmhouse. By and by he thought he would like to have a wife to keep the house tidy for him. So he mounted his horse, and trotted away to court a pretty maid whose name was Molly.

"Will you marry me?" he asked her.

"To be sure I will," she said.

Then he had her get up behind him on his horse and they rode to the church. There they were married, and afterward Jan took Molly to his home.

Everything went very well with them for a long time. Molly kept the house neat, and she was always pleasant and happy.

One day Jan said to her, "Wife, can you milk?"

"Oh, yes! Jan, I can milk," she replied. "Mother used to milk when I lived at home, and she taught me how."

So Jan went to market and bought ten red cows. He drove them to his farm, and every morning and evening Molly milked them.

She got along very well with the cows for a long time. Then one day, when she had driven them to the pond to drink, she thought they did not drink fast enough. So she drove them right into the deep water to make them drink faster, and they were all drowned.

When Jan came home she told him what had happened. "Oh, well! never mind, my dear," he said. "Better luck next time."

A week or two later Jan said to her, "Wife, can you take care of pigs?"

"Oh, yes! Jan, I can take care of pigs,"

she replied. "Mother used to take care of pigs when I lived at home, and she taught me how."

So Jan went to market and bought ten black pigs. After he got them to his farm, Molly took care of them. All went well until one day, when she had put their feed in the trough, she thought they did not eat fast enough. In order to make them eat faster, she pushed their heads down into the food, and they were all choked to death.

When Jan came home she told him what had happened. "Oh, well! never mind, my dear," he said. "Better luck next time."

A few days afterward Jan said to her, "Wife, can you make bread?"

"Oh, yes! Jan, I can make bread," she answered. "Mother used to make it when I lived at home, and she taught me how."

So he bought everything that his wife needed for bread-making. But she found

that the flour had some bran in it. Then she carried it to the top of a high breezy hill, thinking that the wind would blow the bran out. The wind, however, not only blew out the bran, but blew away the flour also.

When Jan came home, Molly told him what she had done. "Oh, well! never mind, my dear," he said. "Better luck next time."

Things went on much as they had at first for a while. Then Jan asked, "Wife, can you brew?"

"Oh, yes! Jan, I can brew," she replied. "Mother used to brew when I was at home, and she taught me how."

So he bought all that she needed to brew ale. Everything progressed as it should until she had brewed the ale and put it in a barrel. Then a big brown dog came into the kitchen and looked her in the face.

She drove him out of the house, but he hung around the door. That did not suit

her, and she shook her apron at him and shouted threateningly. When that did not make him go, and he continued to look up in her face she pulled the plug out of the barrel of ale and threw it at the dog.

"What do you look at me for?" she cried. "I am Jan's wife."

The dog retreated only as far as the road. So she took her broom and chased him away. Afterward she hurried back to the house, but by that time the ale had all run out of the barrel.

When Jan came home she told him what had happened. "Oh, well! never mind, my dear," he said. "Better luck next time."

XI

HEREAFTER

A FEW days later Molly said to herself, " 'Tis time to clean up my house."

So she went to work, and as she was moving her big bed she found, on the canopy at the head of it, a bag of money. In the evening she said to Jan: "On the canopy at the head of the bed is a bag of money. What is it for?"

"That is for hereafter, my dear," he replied.

It chanced just then that a robber was listening outside the window, and he heard what Jan said. Next day Jan went to market. As soon as he was well out of the way, the robber came and knocked at the door.

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72 BEDTIME WONDER TALES

"Then I'm a ruined man," Jan groaned; "for I was saving that money to pay our rent. The only thing we can do now is to roam the world over to regain the money that has been stolen."

So they rolled up a bundle of bedding, which Jan took on his back, and they started. Many a long day they plodded on and on, until one evening they stopped under a high tree at the foot of a big hill.

Presently they were alarmed to hear voices near by, and they climbed up into the tree, taking the bundle of bedding with them. Scarcely had they got well up among the branches, when a door in the side of the hill opened, and out came a party of ladies and gentlemen.

Two of the gentlemen carried a long table, which they set down under the tree. Some of their companions were laden with food and drink, and others brought out bags of

HEREAFTER

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"What do you want?" Molly asked.

"I am Hereafter," the robber said, "and I have come for the bag of money."

He was dressed like a rich gentleman, and Molly thought it was very nice of so fine a gentleman to come himself for the money instead of sending a servant. She at once stood on a chair by the bedside, reached up to the top of the canopy, and got the bag of money. As soon as the robber received it he thanked her courteously and hurried away.

When the farmer came home, his wife said, "Jan, while you were at market, Hereafter called to get the bag of money."

"What do you mean, my dear?" Jan inquired.

"Why, you told me it was for Hereafter," she explained. "This morning a gentleman came to the door and said that was his name. He asked for the bag of money, and I gave it to him."

HEREAFTER

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money. All these things were placed on the table.

Molly saw that one of the gentlemen was Hereafter, and that he still had Jan's bag of money. She pointed him out to her husband, and whispered: "He is the one who robbed us. What shall we do?"

The people down below had gathered round the table, and were eating, drinking, and talking, and counting the money in the bags.

"Now's the time to get rid of this party of robbers," Jan said, and he dropped the bundle of bedding right down in the very middle of the table. That frightened the robbers so they all ran away.

Then Jan and his wife descended from the tree, took as many money-bags as they could carry, and went back home. They had wealth now; and Jan bought his wife more cows, and more pigs, and more flour, and all

that she needed to brew ale. There were no more such mishaps as had occurred before, and the two lived happily the rest of their days.

and except for allowing you to leave the palace, he will grant any request you make of him. This is what you must do—tell him you want a wheelbarrow and a bearskin. When you get them, bring them to me, and I will touch them with my magic wand. The bearskin will become a covering for you that will prevent you from being recognized, and the wheelbarrow will take you wherever you wish to go.”

The princess went to the king, and asked for the wheelbarrow and the bearskin. He was greatly astonished that she should want such things, but he had them brought, and she took them to her nurse.

The witch touched them with her wand, and when the princess put on the bearskin no one would have suspected that she was a maiden and not a real bear.

In this queer attire she seated herself on the wheelbarrow.

ONCE upon a time there was a king who had a daughter of whom he was very proud and fond. He was fearful that something would happen to her if she went outside of the palace. So, because of his great love for her, he kept her shut up in her own rooms.

The princess did not at all like living as a prisoner, and she complained bitterly to her nurse. This nurse was a witch and had strange powers, facts well known to the princess, but of which the king knew nothing.

When the nurse found that the princess would not be soothed or comforted, she said to her: “Your father loves you very dearly,

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“Here is my wand,” the nurse said. “Take it with you. I’m sure you will find it useful.”

Then she told her certain words to say to the wheelbarrow whenever she wished to stop in her journey, and they bade each other good-by. Now the princess wished herself out of the palace and traveling to see the world.

Away went the wheelbarrow on and on until she was far beyond the boundaries of her father’s kingdom. At last she found herself passing through a great forest, and she stopped the wheelbarrow by speaking the words the nurse had told her to use. Afterward she hid herself and the wheelbarrow in a leafy thicket.

A youthful king, who was the ruler of that country, happened to be hunting with his dogs in the forest, and he caught sight of the bear in the shrubbery. So he shouted to

his dogs and encouraged them to attack the creature.

The princess saw that she was in great peril, and she cried: "Call off your dogs, or they will kill me. What harm have I ever done you?"

For a moment the young king stood stock still, so startled was he at hearing these words coming from a bear. Then he called back his dogs, and said gently to the bear: "Will you come with me? I will take you to my palace."

"I will come gladly," the princess responded; and she seated herself on the wheelbarrow, which moved along toward the palace in company with the young king.

You can imagine the surprise of the king's mother when she saw her son returning with a bear which was riding on a wheelbarrow. The princess in the bearskin entered the palace and began doing the housework, and she

the ball. As soon as he had started the princess in the bearskin went to the queen and begged to be allowed to go also. She promised to hide herself so well that no one would know she was there, and the queen was too kind-hearted to refuse the desired permission.

did it better than any other servant whom the king's mother had ever employed.

At the time that the bear became a member of the royal household there were great festivities going on in the palace of a neighboring ruler. Every evening for a week there was a grand ball. One day, at dinner, the young king told his mother he was going to the grand ball that evening.

"Very well," his mother said; "go and dance and enjoy yourself."

Suddenly a voice came from under the table, where the princess in the bearskin had lain down, as was her custom at mealtime. "Let me go to the ball," she said. "I too would like to dance."

To let a bear dance at a royal ball was absurd, and the young king's only answer was to give the bear a kick and drive the shaggy creature out of the room.

In the evening the young king set off for

XIII

A BEAUTIFUL STRANGER

WHEN the princess in the bearskin found that she would be allowed to go to the ball, she went out to the shed where her wheelbarrow was kept. Then she touched her furry covering with the wand the witch nurse had given her, and instantly she was her former self, clad in an exquisite ball dress. She touched the wheelbarrow with the wand, and it became a carriage drawn by two prancing steeds.

In this carriage she drove to the grand portal of the neighboring king's palace. When she entered the ball-room, she looked so lovely that every one wondered who she

was, but not a person there had ever seen her before, or could tell whence she came.

From the moment that the young king saw her he loved her with all his soul. During the entire evening he would dance only with the beautiful stranger, though she never spoke a word to him nor to any one else.

When the ball was over, the princess hastily entered her carriage and drove away at full speed; for she wished to get home in time to transform herself into a bear and the carriage into a wheelbarrow before the young king arrived.

He put spurs to his horse and rode after her, intending not to let her get out of his sight, but she went faster than he could follow, and when he reached his palace he had no idea what had become of her. He told his mother of the beautiful stranger with whom he had danced so often, and would talk of nothing else.

more to follow her carriage, but she outdistanced him. By the time he reached home she was a bear in the corner, and she heard him tell his mother all about the beautiful lady whom he thought so wonderfully charming.

The young king went to a third ball the next evening, and the princess went also. They danced only with each other, and though he could not induce her to speak, yet she did allow him to slip a ring on her finger.

He tried to overtake her carriage after the ball, but failed as usual. When he reached home he said to his mother: "I do not know what is to become of me. I am so much in love with that lady, and have so little prospect of finding out who she is that I think I shall go crazy. I have danced with her and given her a ring, yet I do not know her name nor where to find her."

The princess in the bearskin heard all their conversation as she lay curled up in a corner of the room. She smiled, and said to herself, "How surprised they would be if they knew that I was the beautiful stranger!"

The next evening there was a second ball, and of course the young king was determined not to miss it, for he thought he would once more see the lovely lady. Yes, he would dance with her, and talk with her, and make her talk to him.

A large and splendid company assembled, and as the music struck up for the first dance the beautiful stranger entered the room, looking even more radiant than she had the night before.

Again the young king danced with her all the evening, and again she never spoke a word.

When the ball was over, he tried once

At hearing this the princess in the bearskin lying in the corner laughed softly and muttered to herself.

"I am tired to death," the young king continued. "Order some soup to be made for me. I suppose the bear will have to make it. All the other palace servants are in bed and asleep at this late hour of the night. I wish they were not. That bear irritates me horribly. Every time I speak of my love the brute mutters and laughs and seems to mock me. I hate the sight of the creature."

But the princess in the bearskin made the soup. When she was bringing it to the young king she took from her finger the ring he had given to her at the ball, and dropped it into the plate.

He ate the soup very languidly, for he was sad at heart, and all his thoughts were concerned with wondering how and where he

could see the lovely stranger again. Suddenly he noticed the ring at the bottom of the plate, and stared at it motionless with surprise.

Then he observed the bear standing near by, looking at him with gentle beseeching eyes, and he said, "I wonder if you can explain this mystery."

The princess in the bearskin decided to keep him mystified no longer. So she touched her fur covering with the wand, and instantly became the beautiful lady in the silken ball dress.

The young king saw that she was the stranger whom he loved, and he led her to his mother. Then the princess told them who she was, and how she had been kept shut up in her father's palace till her imprisonment became unendurable.

Great was the joy of the mother of the young king to think that he was to have so

good and beautiful a wife. They were married soon afterward, and they lived happily many years, reigning wisely over their kingdom.

XIV

THE ENCHANTED CASTLE

ON some huge rocks that overlook a certain pleasant Spanish valley there used to stand a beautiful castle in which dwelt a powerful Moor named Al Rachid. Among the farm folk in the valley was a beautiful maiden, the daughter of a rich farmer. But the fact of her father's wealth did not make her idle. She worked with the farm laborers in the fields, and she mingled her sweet voice with theirs when they sang as they plied their hoes.

Al Rachid heard of her beauty, and he often secreted himself in the edge of an adjacent forest to watch her at her work. The

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more he saw of her, the more he was impressed by her charm.

"I love her to distraction," he said, "but she has given her love to a handsome youth who is a near neighbor. Therefore she cannot be mine unless I take her by force."

One evening she did not return to the farmhouse with the laborers. Search was made for her everywhere, but she could not be found. Mounted parties scoured the country all around in vain.

At last a wise woman of the district was consulted. She made a fire of pine needles, and read from her book of magic. Thus she discovered that Al Rachid had lured the maiden into the forest, and had carried her away to his castle by a secret underground passage.

"I will attempt her rescue," the maiden's lover declared. He was of a daring disposition and feared not danger.

"Go with me to the forest," the wise woman said. "I will help you to gain entrance to the secret passage by which your lady love was spirited away."

The youth armed himself with his shield and sword, and followed her. At length they reached an old oak tree, and walked around it three times. Then she knocked with her staff on the ground, and a passage opened by which the youth descended.

The earth closed above him, and he saw that the walls on either side were studded with magnificent jewels, which at first dazzled him by their brilliance. When he got more accustomed to the strong light he discovered a coal black horse standing saddled and bridled ready for him to mount. But he would not be tempted, for he knew it was safer to walk than to trust himself to a strange horse.

After going some distance he came to a



The fight with Al Rachid

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river on which was a boat rowed by six lovely maidens. "Get in our boat, and we will row you across," they said.

"No," he responded, "the river is shallow. I can wade." And he boldly splashed through the stream to the other shore.

A little farther on he heard the piteous cry of a child. He hastened forward, and found a pretty little boy. "Carry me a little way," the child besought him with tears in his eyes. "I am very tired, and I still have a long distance to go."

The young man had not the heart to refuse this request, but no sooner had he raised the boy in his arms than the child turned into a giant, who twined his arms round the young man's neck. The youth would have been strangled had not he quickly made the sign of the cross. That caused the giant to relax his hold and vanish.

Then the youth hastened on his way until

he entered a narrow passage where there was total darkness. Nothing daunted, he drew his sword and struck out so that the blade hit against the jewels on the sides of the passage. At every blow the sparks flew and lit the passage enough to enable him to get through it without mishap or loss of time.

Now he saw in the distance two enormous tigers which seemed to be preparing to tear him to pieces. But when they observed that he did not fear them, and was advancing sword in hand, they ran away.

At length he came to the underground entrance to Al Rachid's castle. The ponderous gates were wide open, but an enormous frog blocked the way, and emitted flames of fire from its mouth. Do what he would, there was no getting near the creature.

Finally he threw his sword over the frog's head, and the frog turned round to get it.

home village, where they were received with great rejoicing. Not long afterward they were married, and for the rest of their days they lived happily and peacefully in the pleasant valley.

Then the youth sprang forward and leaped on the creature's back. There he clung and dug his spurs into the frog, compelling it to advance into the castle.

As it was going along he dexterously picked up his sword, and used it to force the frog to do his will. The more he struck and spurred the frog, the fiercer were the flames it breathed forth.

Soon Al Rachid heard the commotion, and came hurrying to see what it meant. But he suddenly found himself enveloped in the flames which the youth compelled the frog to throw out.

A few moments sufficed to put an end to the cruel Moor, and then, at one stroke, the youth cut off the frog's head. Instantly the castle vanished, and on the rock where it had stood the youth found the maiden whom he loved.

The two wended their way back to their

XV

SEVEN INCHES

THERE was once a king who had three daughters. The two eldest were very proud and selfish, but the youngest was as nice as they were disagreeable. By and by three princes came to court them, and two of the princes were exactly like the older sisters, while the other was just as charming as the youngest sister, who was his sweetheart.

One day the king and his daughters and the princes were walking down to a small lake on the palace grounds, when they met a beggar. The king wouldn't give him anything, and the eldest princes and princesses wouldn't give him anything. But the youngest princess and her true love each gave him

a shilling, and they gave him kind words too, which were best of all.

When they got to the edge of the lake, what did they find but the most beautiful boat ever seen, hitched by a silver chain to a tree on the shore. "I'll take a sail in this fine boat," the eldest sister said.

"And I'll take a sail in this fine boat too," the second eldest said.

But the youngest said, "I won't take a ride in this fine boat, for I'm afraid it's an enchanted one."

However, after some urging, the other two persuaded her to get into the boat with them. The king and the princes were about to follow, when there sprang up on the deck a little man only seven inches high, and ordered them to stand back. They put their hands to their swords, but were not able to draw them, for all strength had left their arms.

let them down by a basket and windlass into what seemed to be a well, not far from the edge of the lake.

When the last lady was out of sight, strength returned to the limbs of the helpless men. Round the lake they ran, and never stopped until they came to the well. A silk rope was wound on the axle of the windlass, and a stout wicker basket was hitched to it.

The princes were all eager to descend into the well to rescue the sisters, and the eldest went first. He got into the basket, and the others let him down. They lost sight of him, and then, after winding off a hundred yards of the silk rope, it slackened, and they stopped turning. He was to give the rope a jerk when he wanted to be pulled up, but after waiting two hours and getting no signal they returned to the palace.

Guards remained watching at the mouth of the well until the next morning, and still

Seven Inches loosened the silver chain, and pushed away. He grinned at the four men, and said: "Bid these ladies farewell for a while. I wouldn't have parted them from you had it not been for the lack of charity of you eldest three.

"The youngest prince is different, and I have a few words to say to him. Listen, prince. You'll recover your princess all in good time, and afterward you and she will be as happy as the day is long. To be happy is to be rich. Unhappy people would not be rich if they were rolling in gold."

Away sailed the boat, and the sisters stretched out their hands, but were not able to say a word. They were no longer in crossing the lake than a cat would be in washing its ear.

The four men on the shore could not stir to follow them, and they watched while Seven Inches handed the sisters out of the boat and

there was no signal. Then the second prince went down.

Another day passed, and all the time the rope hung limp and motionless. So it was hauled up, and down went the third prince. As he descended, it became as dark around him as if he were in a big pot with the cover on.

But at last he saw a glimmer down below, and presently reached the bottom of the well. He stepped out of the basket, and found himself in a pleasant country where there were woods and green fields. Not far away was a castle, and over all was a bright blue sky.

"Let's see what sort of people are in the castle," he said.

On he walked, and soon came to it. The front door was open, and he entered and went from room to room, each finer than the last, until he reached the handsomest of all

with a table in the middle, and a brisk fire burning in the fireplace.

There was a splendid dinner on the table, but though the prince was exceedingly hungry he was too mannerly to eat without being invited. So he sat by the fire and waited. After a few minutes, he heard footsteps, and in came Seven Inches and the youngest sister.

Prince and princess flew into one another's arms, overjoyed to be united. As soon as their greeting was over, the little man said: "Sir, why weren't you eating? The eldest prince came in here two days ago, and the other yesterday. Each began to devour the food without leave or license, and they only gave me the rough side of their tongues when I told them they were making themselves too free. Well, I don't think they feel much hunger now. There they are, good marble, instead of flesh and blood."

XVI

A BRAVE RESCUE

THE next morning Seven Inches said to the prince: "I want you to go after the other two princesses. You'll have to set out this way"; and he pointed toward the sun. "You'll find the younger one in a giant's castle this evening. By that time you'll be tired and hungry. Stay there tonight, and the next day travel on until sundown, when you'll reach another giant's castle. There you'll find the eldest princess. She and her sister are housekeepers for the two giants.

"You can bring them here with you. I hope they have learned a lesson, and that, if they ever get home, they will look on poor people as human like themselves. Here is

He pointed to two statues in different corners of the room, and the youngest prince was so perturbed he could not speak.

"But you needn't fear any such fate for yourself," Seven Inches reassured him. "We will have dinner now. I will sit between you and the lady."

The food was delicious, Seven Inches was a good host, and his guests would have been perfectly happy, only for the sight of the stone men in the corners.

After supper Seven Inches went off, and the prince asked the princess what had become of her sisters.

"I do not know," she replied, "except that Seven Inches told me they had gone somewhere to work for a living. But he promised he would manage to get them back here presently."

A BRAVE RESCUE

a small knife. Throw it behind you if you should be too closely pursued. And here is a thimble which you may need to use for the same purpose."

Away-went the prince, and he was certainly tired and hungry when he reached the castle in the evening. The princess was delighted to see him, and gave him the best supper she could prepare. Just as he was finishing it she heard the giant at the gate. So she hastily hid the prince in a closet and cleared off the table.

In came the giant, and began to sniff the air suspiciously. "By my life!" he exclaimed, "some one's here. I smell fresh meat."

"Oh! it's only the calf that was killed to-day," the princess told him.

"Yes, yes," he agreed, and then asked, "Is supper ready?"

"It is," she said; and by the time he was

through he had hidden three quarters of the calf and a keg of wine in his great stomach.

As he gulped the last mouthful he looked around. "I think I smell fresh meat still," he said.

"You are sleepy," she told him. "Go to bed."

"When will you marry me?" he asked. "You're putting me off too long."

"I'll marry you on St. Tibb's Eve," she said.

"I wish I knew how far off that is," he grumbled, and he fell sound asleep leaning on the table with his head in the empty meat dish.

On the morrow the giant went out immediately after he had had breakfast, and the prince set off to the castle where the eldest sister was. She welcomed him as warmly as the other had, when he arrived at sundown, gave him a good supper, and hid him.

them and outran the wind which blew behind them. At last they were near the castle where the prince had spent the previous night. Here the younger sister was waiting beside a high hedge, mounted on a fine steed.

By this time the pursuing giant was again in sight, and the other giant soon joined him. The chase was more exciting than ever, and the giants gained steadily. They made three strides while the horses were making two. Finally, when they were within seventy rods, the prince flung back the thimble.

Down went the ground behind the fugitives, and a rocky chasm a quarter of a mile deep, with its bottom full of black water, separated them from their pursuers. Before the giants could get round this gaping abyss the prince and his companions had reached the domain of Seven Inches. A thick thorny hedge which surrounded it opened to let them in, and closed behind them.

The giant came home, and as soon as he had eaten he went to sleep.

Somewhat after midnight, when the giant's snoring showed that he was sleeping soundly, the princess went with the prince to the stable, where they saddled two horses. Then they galloped away. But the horses' hoofs struck the stones outside the gate, and wakened the giant.

Forth he came, and hurried after the fugitives. He roared, and he shouted, and the more noise he made the faster ran the horses. But he gained on them, and just as the day was breaking he was only twenty rods behind.

So the prince took the little knife that Seven Inches had given him, and tossed it over his shoulder. At once a thick wood sprang up between the giant and the fugitives. On sped the horses so swiftly that they caught the wind which blew ahead of

Great was the joy of the three sisters when they met in the palace. But as soon as the two eldest saw the stone statues in the dining-room they began shedding tears over the fate of their princes. Their lamentations were cut short by Seven Inches, who came in and touched the statues with his rod.

Immediately the princes came to life, and there was much hugging and kissing. Afterward every one sat down to a nice breakfast, with Seven Inches at the head of the table.

When breakfast was over he took them into another room where were heaps of gold and silver and diamonds, and silks and satins. On a table lay three crowns, exactly alike, made of gold, silver, and copper. He took up one of them and gave it to the eldest princess, another he gave to the second princess, and the third he gave to the youngest.

"Now," he said, "you can all go to the

well down which you came from the upper world, and if you will jerk the rope you will be drawn up. But as the basket will hold only one, you must take turns, and of course the ladies will have their turns before you young men.

"I want to caution you princesses to keep your crowns safe, and to all marry on the same day, with the crowns on your heads. If you attempt to marry separately or without your crowns, you will only make trouble for yourselves. Mind what I say."

citement she started on her upward journey. In a short time the basket was let down, and the second sister ascended. Before the youngest sister left, she put her arms round her prince's neck and kissed him and cried on his shoulder.

Finally, all had been drawn up except the youngest prince, and he put a big stone in the basket. Then he stood back a little distance and waited. After the basket had been hoisted about half way, down it came with a tremendous crash, and the stone was broken into fragments.

There was nothing for the prince to do then but to return to the castle. The days passed, and he rambled through the castle upstairs and down, and he walked in the garden and the park, and he had the very finest of eating and a bed of bog-down to sleep on.

I don't think you and I would be tired of

XVII

LEFT BEHIND

THE princes and their lady-loves left Seven Inches very respectfully, and walked arm in arm to the well. But the youngest sister and her companion lagged far enough behind the others to talk together without being overheard.

"I'm afraid the older princes will harm you if they can," she said to him. "Here is my crown. Take it and keep it under your cloak. Your turn to be drawn up will come last. Don't get into the basket, but put in a big stone and see what will happen."

When they were all at the well they gave the rope a pull, and the eldest princess got into the basket. With a little scream of ex-

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this way of living for ever. But the prince got tired of it before a week was past. At the end of a month he was so lonesome for his true love that he didn't know what to do with himself. To make matters worse, not a sight could he get anywhere of Seven Inches.

One morning he went into the treasure room and noticed on the table a beautiful snuff-box that he didn't remember having seen there before. He took it in his hands and opened it, and Seven Inches stepped out on the table.

"Prince," the manikin said, "I am thinking that you're getting a little tired of my castle."

"Ah!" the prince sighed, "if I had my princess here, and could see you now and then, I'd never have a dismal day."

"Well, you've been here long enough," the little man said, "and you're needed up

above. Keep your bride's crown safe. You'd better take along this snuff-box too, and when you need my help open it."

Soon afterward the prince went out to the garden. There he walked down a gravel path that had a hedge on either side. He kept his eyes on the ground, thinking of one thing and another, and when at last he looked up, he was amazed to find himself outside of a blacksmith's yard gate that he had often passed before, only about a mile from the palace of his betrothed princess. His clothes had become ragged during the time that had passed since he went down in the well, but he had the crown and the snuff-box safe under his cloak.

The blacksmith came out, and said: "It's a shame for a big strong fellow like you to be loafing when there's so much work to be done. Are you any good with hammer and tongs? Come in and lend a hand. I'll give

you food and lodging, and a few shillings when you earn them."

"All right," the prince responded, "work is the very thing I want."

So in he went, took a sledge, and pounded away at a red-hot bar that the blacksmith turned on the anvil to make into a set of horseshoes. They hadn't been at this job long when an idler of a tailor strolled in. The blacksmith asked him what news he had.

Then the fellow took hold of the handle of the bellows and began to blow, while he told all he had heard for the last two days. Nor had he gone far with his story before the forge was half filled with women knitting stockings and men smoking. This is what he said:

"You all know that the two princesses were unwilling to be married till the youngest was ready with her crown and her sweetheart. But after the windlass loosened acci-

dentally when they were pulling him up out of the well, there was no more sign of a well or a rope or a windlass on the other side of the palace lake than there is on the palm of your hand.

"So the princes who were courting the elder daughters wouldn't give their ladies nor the king any peace till they got a time set for the marriage. It was to take place this morning, and I went to see it.

"Sure, I was delighted with the grand dresses of the two brides, and the crowns on their heads. The youngest sister, dressed all in white, was standing mournfully by, and everything was ready. Then in came the two bridegrooms as proud and grand as you please. They were walking up to the altar rails when the floor opened six feet wide under them, and down they went among the dead men and the coffins in the vault.

"Oh! such screeching as there was among

the ladies, and such running and peeping down. But the sexton soon opened the door of the vault, and out came the two princes in their fine clothes covered an inch thick with cobwebs and mold.

"Then the king told them the marriage must be put off. 'For,' says he, 'I see there is no use thinking of it till my youngest gets her crown and can be married with the elder two. She shall be the wife of whoever brings a crown to me like theirs,' he says."

"I saw those crowns the other day," the blacksmith remarked, "and there's not a metal-worker on the face of the earth who can make one like them."

"Faint heart never won fair lady," his ragged helper said. "Go to the palace and ask for a quarter of a pound of gold, a quarter of a pound of silver, and a quarter of a pound of copper. Get one of the crowns for a pattern, and I pledge my head that in the

morning I'll give you the very thing wanted."

"Are you in earnest?" the blacksmith asked.

"Certainly I am," the prince answered.
"Go."

he had received from his true love, whereat the people in the yard all shouted and huzzaed. He gave the crowns to the blacksmith to carry to the palace, and off the blacksmith went accompanied by nearly all the townspeople.

The king rejoiced greatly when he saw the crowns. He took them in his hands and examined them. Then he said to the blacksmith: "You have made a crown so like the other I can't tell them apart, but it is impossible for me to reward you as I promised. You are a married man already. So what's to be done?"

"Faith, your Majesty," the blacksmith exclaimed, "I didn't make that crown. A big vagrant of a fellow who took employment with me yesterday made it."

The king turned to his youngest daughter, and asked, "Will you marry the man that made this crown?"

THE blacksmith went to the palace and got the gold, silver, and copper, and the pattern crown. Then he returned and gave them to his helper.

At nightfall the prince shut the forge door, and the neighbors all gathered in the yard. There they listened to him hammering, hammering until daybreak. Every little while he would throw out through the window bits of the metals brought from the palace, and the idlers scrambled for them, cursing one another, and praying for the good luck of the workman.

Just as the sun was about to rise he brought out the pattern crown and the one

She knew it right well, and guessed that her true love had sent it. "I will marry the man who sent the crown," she answered.

The king called to him the eldest of the two princes, and said, "Go to the blacksmith's shop with my best coach and bring home the bridegroom."

The prince was very unwilling to do this, but thought best not to refuse. When he came to the forge, he saw the smith's helper standing at the door, and beckoned him over to the coach. "Are you the fellow who sent those crowns to the palace?" he asked.

"Yes," the other replied.

"Well then," he said, "maybe you'd give yourself a brushing and get into this coach. The king wants to see you. I pity the youngest princess."

The blacksmith's helper got into the coach, and while it was on the way he opened the snuff-box. Out stepped Seven Inches and

stood on the prince's knee. "What's the matter now?" Seven Inches asked.

"I want to return to the forge," the prince said, "and have the coach go on filled with cobblestones."

No sooner had he said the words than his wish was granted; and the horses wondered what had happened, the coach drew so heavily. When the coach arrived at the palace the king himself opened the door to pay respect to the youth who was to be his son-in-law.

But the moment he turned the handle, a shower of stones fell on his powdered wig and silk coat, and knocked him down. There was great alarm and some tittering among the attendants, and the king looked very cross at the eldest prince as he wiped the blood from his forehead.

"My liege," the prince said, "I am very sorry for this accident. It is not my fault.

self, and away he went to the blacksmith's forge.

No one could have been more courteous in inviting the ragged blacksmith's helper to ride to the palace.

When on the way, the prince opened his snuff-box again, Seven Inches came out, and the prince said, "I wish I could be dressed now according to my rank."

"That shall be as you desire," Seven Inches responded; and at once fine new raiment replaced the shabby old garments. "Now you need my help no more, and I bid you farewell," Seven Inches added.

So saying, he vanished. This time there alighted from the coach at the entrance to the palace a handsome richly attired prince, and the first thing he did was to run and embrace his sweetheart.

There was great rejoicing in the palace and throughout the royal realm. The mar-

I saw the blacksmith's helper get into the coach, and we never stopped at all on the way."

"You must have been uncivil to him," the king grumbled.

Then he addressed the second prince, saying: "I'll send you after the young man at the blacksmith's. Get on the coach, and start along, and be sure that you're polite."

But there are some people who haven't it in them to be good-natured. Not a bit more civil was the new messenger than the other, and neither did he bring his passenger the entire distance. When the coach returned to the palace, and the king opened the door, a shower of mud came pouring forth.

How he did fume and splutter and shake himself! "There's no use of going on this way," he snorted. "I'll be my own messenger."

So he changed his clothes and washed him-

riages were not much delayed, and the youngest prince and princess were the happiest wedded couple that ever got into a story.

XIX

THE FORGOTTEN CROW

THERE was once a poor fisherman who had caught nothing for many days. "What an unhappy life I lead!" he sighed, as he sat on a boulder by the shore with his empty nets beside him.

He was still sitting there bemoaning his hard fate when a large crow alighted near by. "You seem discontented," the crow said. "How would you like to get away from the wearisome toil and uncertain rewards of catching fish, and live in ease?"

"Ah!" the fisherman exclaimed, "greatly do I desire to escape from this miserable life."

"Then listen," the crow said. "In a far

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"This is the governor," he informed the fisherman. "Make haste and put your garments on him, and his on you."

The fisherman obeyed, and when he had finished making the change the crow said: "Get on my back, and I will take you to the palace. I will leave you where the dead ruler was lying. After a while you can get up, and the people will accept you as their governor."

"I will do as you say," the fisherman responded.

So the crow carried him to the palace and left him where the body of the governor had been. Some palace attendants were in the room acting as watchers, but they were all asleep. They awoke at daybreak, and after a while they saw the fisherman move.

"Our ruler is alive!" they shouted.

Great was the joy of the people when they heard the news. The fisherman was now

distant province the ruler has just died. I will give you the governorship of the province and all the dead ruler's possessions, if you will promise to remember the benefits I bestow, and treat my race with kindness."

"Never will I forget your generosity," the fisherman promised; "and I will try to see that the crows find only friends among my people."

"That is all I want to know," the crow said. "Now get on my back, and I will carry you to your province."

The fisherman seated himself on the crow's back, and away they went over mountains and valleys, rivers and lakes. At last they reached the far distance province, and the crow brought the fisherman down to earth just outside the gate of the royal city.

There they waited until midnight, and then the crow flew to the palace. He soon returned bringing the dead ruler with him.

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their governor, and for many years he ruled the province and enjoyed the possessions of the former governor.

But, as time went on, he forgot the crow to whom he was indebted for his good fortune. He did not treat the crows of his realm with the kindness he had promised. Instead he had them driven from the fields. He even attempted to banish them from the province.

His ingratitude stirred the anger of the crow who had made him rich and powerful. At length the crow journeyed to see him. The one-time fisherman was strolling in the palace garden when the crow flapped down in the pathway before him.

"O ruler," the crow said, "it is I who made you governor of this province. But though I have done much for you, I can do more. Would you like to go where all is pleasure and delight?"

"Yes," the governor replied.

"Then get on my back," the crow said.

The governor seated himself on the crow's back, and soon they had left the palace and city behind. The flight was a long one, and when they came to earth they were at the door of the hut where the ruler had formerly lived as a fisherman in poverty and squalor.

"You have deceived me!" he cried. "Carry me back to my province."

"No," the crow said, as he prepared to fly away. "Here you must remain as a punishment for not doing as you promised."

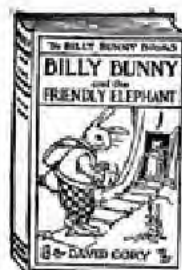
And in that shabby hut by the seashore the former ruler has dwelt ever since.

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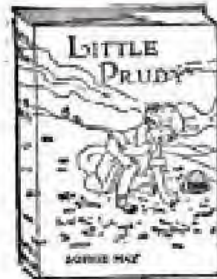
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